

Pastor's Message
November 22, 2020

Hi Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Wishing you a Happy Thanksgiving! Although Thanksgiving 2020 is like no other that we have experienced in the past, it is still a time to give thanks for the many blessings that God had bestowed on us as individuals, as a faith community and as a nation. I am so blessed to have all of you in my life and I pray for your continued health and safety during these challenging and uncertain times.

Advent Worship – We will be including candle lighting in our worship during Advent. If you would like to join in have a candle ready to be lit when we get to that part of the service.

Congregational meetings – There will a virtual (Zoom) congregational meeting on November 29th. At this meeting the 2021 budget will be presented, as well as a slate of nominees for GSELC Church Council members. The second annual congregational meeting will be help virtually after church on December 13th to approve the budget and elect members to the GSELC Church Council.

2021 Offering Envelopes – The 2021 offering envelopes are here and ready to be picked-up. You can pick them up on Sunday, November 29th or December 6th between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. at the church. Masks and social distancing are required. In addition to your own envelopes, please pick up those for family members and/or friends that you would be willing to deliver to their houses.

Communion Sundays in November: November 22 (Christ the King) and November 29 (1st Sunday in Advent)

God's Peace!

Pastor Denise	Home Phone	610-750-6432
	Cell/Text Phone	610-858-8187

Jeremiah 36 and 31

A reading from the 36th and 31st chapters of Jeremiah.

36 In the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, Jeremiah received this Message from God:

² “Get a scroll and write down everything I’ve told you regarding Israel and Judah and all the other nations from the time I first started speaking to you in Josiah’s reign right up to the present day.

³ “Maybe the community of Judah will finally get it, finally understand the catastrophe that I’m planning for them, turn back from their bad lives, and let me forgive their perversity and sin.”

⁴ So Jeremiah called in Baruch son of Neriah. Jeremiah dictated and Baruch wrote down on a scroll everything that God had said to him.

⁵⁻⁶ Then Jeremiah told Baruch, “I’m blacklisted. I can’t go into God’s Temple, so you’ll have to go in my place. Go into the Temple and read everything

you’ve written at my dictation. Wait for a day of fasting when everyone is there to hear you. And make sure that all the people who come from the Judean villages hear you.

⁷ “Maybe, just maybe, they’ll start praying and God will hear their prayers. Maybe they’ll turn back from their bad lives. This is no light matter. God has certainly let them know how angry he is!”

⁸ Baruch ... did everything Jeremiah the prophet told him to do. In the Temple of God he read the Message of God from the scroll.

²⁰⁻²¹ The officials went to the court of the palace ... (and there) Jehudi read it to the king and the officials who were in the king’s service.

²²⁻²³ It was December. The king was sitting in his winter quarters in front of a charcoal

fire. After Jehudi would read three or four columns, the king would cut them off the scroll with his pocketknife and throw them in the fire. He continued in this way until the entire scroll had been burned up in the fire.

27-28 After the king had burned the scroll that Baruch had written at Jeremiah's dictation, Jeremiah received this Message from God: "Get another blank scroll and do it all over again. Write out everything that was in that first scroll that Jehoiakim king of Judah burned up.

(And Jerimiah remembered that God had said),

31 ³¹⁻³² "That's right. The time is coming when I will make a brand-new covenant with Israel

and Judah. It won't be a repeat of the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took their hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant even though I did my part as their Master." God's Decree.

³³⁻³⁴ "This is the brand-new covenant that I will make with Israel when the time comes. I will put my law within them—write it on their hearts!—and be their God. And they will be my people. They will no longer go around setting up schools to teach each other about God. They'll know me firsthand, the dull and the bright, the smart and the slow. I'll wipe the slate clean for each of them. I'll forget they ever sinned!" God's Decree.

Sermon

Grace and Peace to you from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. AMEN

Let us pray:

PRAYER OF THE DAY

God, whose fondness for humanity knows no limit, write your word upon our hearts, so that we need no scroll, no book, no script to know that you love us. Show us the power of your covenant, that you will be faithful to us, even when we fail to remain faithful to you. For the beauty of your word inscribed upon us, we pray, in the name of the one whose body and blood became your new covenant with us, Jesus Christ, our redeemer. Amen.

This morning, we hear from the prophet Jeremiah. And as I mentioned a few weeks ago, prophets were not the most popular people because of the messages from God that they were to share.

And for Jeremiah it was no different. Unlike Isaiah from last

week's text, who experienced God's presence in the most sacred part of the temple; Jeremiah had been banned from the temple.

And so God tells Jeremiah to have his scribe Baruch write down everything that God has told Jeremiah, so that Baruch can take it to the temple to read to the people. The message was a message of God's frustration as God cited incident after incident as examples of how the Israelites were not able to fulfill the promises that they had made to God. And God told them that it was their lack of faithfulness that has caused the hardships and the challenges they were currently experiencing and would experience in the future. So, Jeremiah dictates God's message to Baruch as he writes it onto a scroll. Then Baruch takes the scroll to the temple to

read it to the people who have come to worship.

The officials from the court of King Jehoiakim heard about the reading of the scroll and seized the scroll to take it the king.

Jehudi, one of the king's officials began to read the scroll to the king. After he read three or four lines, the king grabbed the scroll from Jehudi and with his pocketknife, the King cut off the words that Jehudi had just read from the scroll and threw the torn pieces of scroll into the fire. The king continued doing this until the entire scroll had been burned up in the fire.

After hearing that the king had burned the scroll with God's message on it, Jeremiah received this message from God. God said, "Jeremiah, get another blank scroll and do it all over again. Write out everything that was in that first scroll that Jehoiakim king of Judah burned up.

And so that is what Jeremiah did.

God was certainly determined that God's word would not be destroyed, God was certainly determined that God would find a way to have the Israelites turn away from their evil ways and uphold their part of the covenant, and God was certainly determined that one day his beloved children would be redeemed and shine the light of God's love to all people.

But is it obvious from the stories that we hear from the Old Testament that even the most faithful could not fulfill their promise to not let anyone or anything get between them and the God of their ancestors.

And although we heard God promise David that there would always be a king of his line to rule over God's people: it is through the prophet Jeremiah that we hear that God's is planning something very new and different. As Jeremiah prophesizes that God will make a new covenant between God and his beloved children.

As God tells Jeremiah the time is coming when I will make a brand-new covenant with Israel and Judah. It won't be anything like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took their hand and lead them out of the land of Egypt to the land that I had promised them. They were unfaithful as they worshiped other God's and turned away from me. They time after time broke the covenant even though I did my part as their Master."

And God continues, "This is the brand-new covenant that I will make with Israel when the time comes. I will put my law within them for I will write it on their hearts. I will be their God and they will be my people. They will no longer go around setting up schools to teach each other about me, for they will get to know me in person. I will wipe the slate clean for each and every one of them. I will forgive them of their sins and I will forget that they have ever sinned.

These are the words that God spoke to Jeremiah sometime during the late 7th century or

early 6th century before the birth of the one through whom God will fulfill this promise.

This is the announcement of the new covenant that will hundreds of year later be fulfilled through the blood of Christ that was shed for us for the forgiveness of our sins.

The new covenant which has cleared the way for us to be in right relationship with God forever and for always. And we will live in this covenant cleansed of our sins as God has promised long before the birth of Christ that God will wipe the slate clean and forget that they/ we have ever sinned.

The new covenant that we participate in as we eat of the bread and drink of the wine, remembering that God did not give up on humanity. Instead, God found a way for us to be in right relationship with God forever as he gave us all of God's self through the life and death of God's one and only Son, so that by God's.

And today is the day in the church year that we celebrate that not only did God send his Son Jesus so that we could get to know God in-person, not only did God sacrifice his Son so that we can live cleansed of our sin, but through God's act of resurrection, God defeated death and Christ is the King who reigns forever.

So, we have heard the promise that God made to David and we

have heard the promise that was prophesied through the prophet Jeremiah.

And now as we enter the season of Advent, we along with Israelites wait for God's promises of a new king and a new covenant to be fulfilled.

AMEN

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

In the name of the + Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

AMEN